

equitable access to the best health care at VA medical centers across America, and especially in the Northeast.

Along with Congresswoman KELLY and Congressmen GRUCCI, HINCHEY and GILMAN, we are introducing two bills to improve the way the VA allocates funding for veterans medical care across the nation.

In 1997, Congress passed legislation that authorized the VA to develop a new formula for allocating veterans medical care dollars across the country. At the time, veterans were moving from the Northeast and Midwest to the South and West, and the VA's formula then did not address how to allocate funding with this shift.

Unfortunately, the new formula developed by the VA still failed to address the changing demographics of the veterans population. The so-called Veterans Equitable Resource Allocation formula (VERA) did begin to provide additional medical care dollars to areas with growing veterans populations, but unfortunately, the VA did so by slashing funding to states with veterans populations that remained stable, like my own state of New Jersey and others in the Northeast.

I know firsthand about the law of unintended consequences. VERA has had the terrible effect of restricting access of veterans to medical care in my part of the country because my district in New Jersey is part of Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) 3. This VISN has borne the brunt of VERA's funding shift. According to the VA's own figures, funding for VISN 3 has been reduced by 6 percent, or \$64 million, at a time when other VISNs saw their allocations increase by as much as 47 percent or even 53 percent!

I continue to ask the VA how this practice is equitable and why medical care in the Northeast should be reduced.

New Jersey has the second oldest veterans population in the nation, behind Florida. Our state has the fourth highest number of complex care patients treated at VA's hospitals. Yet New Jersey's older, sicker veterans are routinely left waiting months for visits to primary care physicians and specialists or denied care at New Jersey's two VA nursing homes.

Something is fundamentally wrong with the VERA allocation formula if it continues to decrease funding for areas where veterans have the greatest medical needs. All veterans, regardless of where they live, have earned and deserve access to the same quality of medical care—care that is too often denied under the current formula based.

That is why I rise today with nearly 30 of my colleagues to introduce these two bills.

The first bill, the Veterans Equal Treatment Act, would repeal the VERA formula and direct the VA to devise a truly equitable allocation formula based on need.

The second bill, the Equitable Care for All Veterans Act, would require the VA to take steps to account for regional differentials—the differences in the costs of providing care in some areas of the country due to the high cost of living, long travel distances, and like—in determining the national means test threshold. This threshold currently stands at \$24,000 for veterans across the country, regardless of where they live.

We know that the costs of such basic necessities as housing and utilities differ across

the country. According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, the ten least affordable States include New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Maine, Vermont and Rhode Island. These States are parts of VISNs 1, 2 and 3—all three VISNs fare the worst under the present VERA allocation formula.

Mr. Speaker, VERA should be adjusted to reflect factors such as the high cost of housing in the means test. It is the least we can do to ensure that all veterans who need and deserve care are provided with access to VA medical centers.

I strongly encourage the Chairman of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee to hold hearings on these issues, and to move forward with changes to the VERA allocation formula as outlined in these two bills.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. PETER A. DeFAZIO

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 25, 2001

Mr. DeFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, earlier today on the vote to consider the previous question on this bill I intended to vote "no" but inadvertently voted "aye".

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 25, 2001

Ms. DeLAURO. Mr. Speaker, during rollcall vote No. 255 on H.J. Res. 50, I mistakenly recorded my vote as "no" when I should have voted "aye".

TRIBUTE TO THE ORIGINAL 29 NAVAJO CODE TALKERS

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 25, 2001

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the original 29 Navajo Code Talkers, who courageously served this country during WWII. The original 29 Navajo code talkers developed a Navajo language-based code to transmit information while in the Pacific theatre. Their efforts were invaluable to this nation and helped bring the war in the Pacific to a close, impacting all Americans. Today these men or their surviving family members are receiving Congressional gold medals of honor as a symbol of our Nation's appreciation for their valor.

In early 1942 the Marines started to recruit Navajo men to serve as code talkers in the Pacific. The Marines were searching for a code, which the Japanese would be unable to break. Since the Navajo language is incredibly complex and consists of complicated syntax and tonal qualities, plus different dialects, it

was an ideal code. The original 29 Navajo Code Talkers developed a code dictionary, which had to be memorized. This code consisted of English translations of Navajo phrases. The Japanese were never able to break the complicated code. The Navajo Code Talkers successfully sent thousands of messages, enabling the Marines and this Nation to achieve victory.

The war in the Pacific was brought to a close with the help of these original 29 Navajo code talkers and the hundreds of code talkers who followed. The Navajo, who bravely served this country, despite poor governmental treatment at home, should be commended for their service. I would ask my colleagues to join me, now and forever, in paying tribute to the original 29 Navajo Code Talkers who bravely served this nation. I am including an article from a recent edition of Indian Country Today, which recognizes the significant contributions of the Navajo Code Talkers.

[From Indian Country Today, July 11, 2001]

NAVAJO CODE TALKERS TO GET
CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDALS

TRUE RECOGNITION A DECADE AFTER HEROISM

(By Brenda Norrell)

SANOSTEE, N.M.—The late Harrison Lapahie's Dine name Yieh Kinne Yah means "He finds things." His son, Harrison Lapahie Jr., is honoring his father's name by finding Navajo Code Talkers who will receive Congressional gold and silver medals.

Born here in Sanostee, officially in 1923 but closer actually to 1928, Harrison Lapahie served in the U.S. Marines using his Native tongue to transmit the code never broken by the Japanese during World War II. Aircraft bombers were "Jay-Sho" buzzards, dive-bombers were "Gini" chicken hawks and battleships were "Lo-Tso" whales.

The original 29 Navajo Code Talkers who created the code will join George Washington, Robert Kennedy, Mother Teresa and Nelson Mandela as recipients of the Congressional gold medal, the nation's highest civilian honor.

With beautiful piano music and galloping horses, an eagle and an American flag on his Web site, Harrison Lapahie's son Harry links readers worldwide to the legacy and history of the Navajo warriors being honored more than half a century after their heroism with their Dine-based military code.

Charles Hedin, Navajo working in health recovery with veterans in Denver, discovered the search for his uncle on the Web site. The late John Willie Jr. was among the original 29 being sought to be honored in Washington this month.

"I was surfing the Web and I landed on Mr. Lapahie's Web site. I didn't know Zonnie Gorman was searching for relatives of Code Talkers. Filled with overwhelming pride, I called her and explained that John Willie Jr. was my uncle."

"We compared some notes and I also helped her to find Adolf Murgursky, another Code Talker."

Willie did not live long enough to receive his recognition.

"I have mixed emotions because the recognition for my uncle's war contributions has come 50 years later," Hedin said, "He was one of the first 29."

Still, he said, "I am so proud it is hard to express the feelings."

Like Lapahie, Zonnie Gorman honors the memory of her father, Carl Nelson Gorman. The late artist, professor and storyteller and

father of internationally renowned artist R. C. Gorman was president of the Navajo Code Talkers Association before his death in 1998.

Gorman, struggling to find the last five of the original 29 code talkers, said plans are being completed with the White House for the award ceremony. Another ceremony later in the summer on the Navajo Nation will honor nearly 400 other Navajo Code Talkers with silver medals.

Lapahie's Web site includes rare, original letters concerning creation of the code and his father's original maps from World War II in the Pacific, along with recognition from Sen. Jeff Bingaman, D-N.M.

Bingaman introduced legislation in April 2000 and pressed Congress to honor Navajo Code Talkers with gold and silver medals. The bill was signed into law Dec. 21, 2000, and the U.S. Mint began designing the special gold and silver medals.

"It has taken too long to properly recognize these soldiers, whose achievements have been obscured by twin veils of secrecy and time. As they approach the final chapter of their lives, it is only fitting that the nation pay them this honor," Bingaman said.

Another secret is revealed in the House bill that describes the code kept secret for 23 years and declassified in 1968.

"Some code talkers were guarded by fellow Marines, whose role was to kill them in case of imminent capture by the enemy."

There are also the names of others who did not live long enough to be recognized, young Navajos who died in combat in Okinawa, Guam, Iwo Jima and other on far away shores and hilltops.

Navajo Code Talkers killed in action were Paul Begay, Johnson Housewood, Peter Johnson, Jimmy Kelly Sr., Paul Kinlachcheeny, Leo Kirk, Ralph Morgan, Sam Morgan, Willie Notah, Tom Singer, Alfred Tsosie, Harry Tsosie and Howard Tsosie.

In the Web tribute to his father, Lapahie says Navajos have been warriors time and again since they signed the Treaty of 1868 with the United States.

"When the United States entered World War II in 1941, the Navajos again left the canyons, plains and mesas of their reservation homes to join the armed forces and played a crucial role in such combat arenas as Guadalcanal, Saipan, Bougainville, Tinian, Anzio, Salerno, Normandy, Tarawa, Iwo Jima, and countless other bloody islands and forgotten battlefields."

More than 3,600 young Navajo men and women joined the armed forces during World War II.

"Proportionately, that figure represents one of the highest percentages of total population in the armed service of any ethnic group in the United States."

Lapahie's Web site includes his father's translation of the Marine Corps Hymn into Navajo and a letter from the president of the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation. Lt. Gen. Ron Christmas writes of an upcoming print honoring the Navajo Code Talkers and notes Lapahie's translation of the corps hymn.

In remembering his father, Harry said, "There is a story when Dad was strolling on one of the islands, and went into a Japanese military site."

"Yet he was untouched because the Japanese thought that he was Japanese!"

Harry's father died in his Los Angeles apartment Nov. 26, 1985, and is buried near Aztec, N.M., not far from the Ute Boarding School in Ignacio, Colo., he attended as a child where he learned his baking skills.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate on February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules committee—of the time, place, and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled, and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Thursday, July 26, 2001 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

JULY 27

9:30 a.m.

Energy and Natural Resources

To hold hearings on H.R. 308, to establish the Guam War Claims Review Commission; and H.R. 309, to provide for the determination of withholding tax rates under the Guam income tax.

SD-366

10 a.m.

Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

To continue hearings to examine the problem, impact, and responses of predatory mortgage lending practices.

SD-538

JULY 30

9:30 a.m.

Governmental Affairs

To hold hearings to examine the rising use of the drug ecstasy, focusing on ways the government can combat the problem.

SD-342

1 p.m.

Judiciary

To hold hearings on the nomination of Robert S. Mueller III, of California, to be Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Department of Justice.

SH-216

JULY 31

10 a.m.

Indian Affairs

To hold hearings on the implementation of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act, focusing on urban Indian Health Care Programs.

SR-485

Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

Children and Families Subcommittee

To hold hearings to examine early detection and early health screening issues.

SD-430

Finance

To hold hearings on the nomination of Robert C. Bonner, to be Commissioner of Customs, and Rosario Marin, to be Treasurer of the United States, both of California, both of the Department of

the Treasury; the nomination of Jon M. Huntsman, Jr., of Utah, to be a Deputy United States Trade Representative; and the nomination of Alex Azar II, of Maryland, to be General Counsel, and the nomination of Janet Rehnquist, of Virginia, to be Inspector General, both of the Department of Health and Human Services.

SD-215

11 a.m.

Foreign Relations

To hold hearings on the nomination of Vincent Martin Battle, of the District of Columbia, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Lebanon; the nomination of Edward William Gnehm, Jr., of Georgia, to be Ambassador to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan; the nomination of Edmund James Hull, of Virginia, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Yemen; the nomination of Richard Henry Jones, of Nebraska, to be Ambassador to the State of Kuwait; the nomination of Theodore H. Kattouf, of Maryland, to be Ambassador to the Syrian Arab Republic; and the nomination of Maureen Quinn, of New Jersey, to be Ambassador to the State of Qatar.

SD-419

2 p.m.

Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

To hold hearings to examine asbestos issues.

SD-430

2:30 p.m.

Commerce, Science, and Transportation Communications Subcommittee

To hold hearings to examine spectrum management and third generation wireless.

SR-253

Appropriations

Military Construction Subcommittee

To hold hearings on proposed budget estimates for the fiscal year 2002 for MILCON budget overview, defense agency, and Army construction.

SD-138

Armed Services

SeaPower Subcommittee

To hold hearings on proposed legislation authorizing funds for fiscal year 2002 for the Department of Defense and the Future Years Defense Program, focusing on Navy shipbuilding programs.

SR-222

4 p.m.

Foreign Relations

To hold hearings the nomination of Robert Geers Loftis, of Colorado, to be Ambassador to the Kingdom of Lesotho; and the nomination of Joseph Gerard Sullivan, of Virginia, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Zimbabwe.

SD-419

AUGUST 1

9 a.m.

Small Business and Entrepreneurship

To hold hearings to examine the business of environmental technology.

SR-428A

9:30 a.m.

Commerce, Science, and Transportation

To hold hearings to examine trade issues.

SR-253

Armed Services

To hold hearings on the nomination of Gen. John P. Jumper, USAF, for reappointment to the grade of general